The AMERICAN SPECTATOR

A LITERARY NEWSPAPER

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EDITORIAL

The American Spectator has no policy in the common sense of that word. It advocates no panaceas; it has no axes to grind; it has no private list of taboos. It offers an opportunity for the untrammelled expression of individual opinion, ignoring what is accepted and may be taken for granted in favor of the unaccepted and misunderstood. Sincerity, authenticity, and passion are its editorial criterion. Its aim is to offer a medium for the truly valuable and adventurous in thought, and to invite contributions from every quarter where stimulating opinions may be expected. Clarity, vigor and humor are the three indispensable qualities which must inform the presentation of its ideas. Real knowledge and a decided point of view will replace the usual conventional comment on irrelevant or foregone conclusions.

The essential editorial problem of the better and more ambitious type of monthly magazine is that it is much too large. Any man who has ever served as an editor of such a magazine knows—and, if caught partly *inter pocula*, will sadly admit—that it is impossible to get enough good copy each month to fill the magazine. He is only too happy, indeed, if he can get even so many as two things that really please him. The rest of his magazine therefore represents a more or less unsatisfactory attempt to fill the established, arbitrary number of pages. For this reason, *The American Spectator* is limited to the size in which it here appears. That size will be increased only when and if the merit of sound copy on hand warrants it.

Another defect of the average magazine is that its editor often permits himself to remain in harness long after his imaginative oats have given out and the magazine thereafter continues simply as a matter of habit. The moment the editors feel that *The American Spectator* is becoming a routine job, is getting dull and is similarly continuing merely as a matter of habit, they will call it a day and will retire in a body to their estates.

The editors of *The American Spectator* have invited various distinguished writers in America, England, France, Germany, Austria and Italy to join them in contributing to its columns, and the almost unanimous response has been immensely gratifying. Each invited writer has been asked to write on what interests him most at the moment, and each writer will be his own editor. It will be the policy of *The American Spectator*, in short, to have no policy that will in any way interfere with or restrain any expression of opinion that any of its invited writers may desire to offer. And what applies to these writers will apply also to each of the editors.

We herewith, accordingly, present to you our first issue.

THE WORST BOOK OF THE MONTH

CHAUCER. By G. K. Chesterton.
9 x 5¾. Pp. 302. 12/6.
London: Faber & Faber.

THE PHYSICIAN AND SEX

by HAVELOCK ELLIS

The subject of sex in its psychic and social bearings is so central, and of an importance now so widely recognized, if not indeed exaggerated, among the general public, that the medical man of today cannot fail to have it brought before him. He cannot, like his predecessors, conventionally ignore its existence, or feel that its recognition would be resented as impertinent or indecorous. Moreover, a knowledge confined to general anatomy, physiology, and pathology is now altogether inadequate.

My own opinion is in accord with these views. I have indeed long felt that medical education displays at this point a vacuum which is altogether lamentable. In my own medical training, which began half a century ago, the psychological aspects of sex had no existence whatever. For my gynæcological teachers the processes of sex in health and disease were purely physical; the only consideration they introduced which could in any way be regarded as psychological in its bearing—and it stands out in memory because it was so isolated—was an unqualified warning against what would now be called contraception. It might be supposed that great progress has been made since those remote days. Here and there, no doubt there has. But I have no evidence that the progress in any country is wide-spread or pronounced. It is less than twenty-five years since Fraenkel stated that "most gynæcologists know practically very little about sexuality," and Van de Velde remarks that that is still true for the great majority though there are now some honorable exceptions. I hear from medical students of today that they receive absolutely no instruction in the psycho-physical processes of sex, their liability to disturbance, or their hygiene. Ancient superstitions still prevail in our medical schools, and the medical students of today are for the most part still treated with almost the same misplaced reverence as the school-children of a century ago, whom it was sometimes considered indecent to instruct in so sexual a subject as botany.

Sexual psychology, normal and abnormal, as well as sexual hygiene, nowadays attracts a general interest and attention which before the present century were undreamed of. The young man of today is sometimes remarkably well informed in relation to the literature of sex, and the young woman of today often approaches these subjects in an inquiring spirit and with an absence of prudery which would have seemed to her grandmother absolutely impious. Until recent years any scientific occupation with sex was usually held to indicate, if not a vicious taste, at all events an unwholesome tendency. At the present time it is among the upholders of personal and public morality that the workers in sexual psychology and the advocates of sexual hygiene find the warmest support.

Just as the ordinary college manuals have ignored the anatomy and physiology of sex as completely as though this function formed no part whatever of animal life, so medical manuals have completely ignored the psychology of sex. It thus comes about that in the scientific knowledge of these matters, which for the comprehension of some cases is vitally important, the physician is often less informed than his patient, and not seldom is the victim of false traditions and antiquated prejudices. Religion and morality have been invoked in behalf of silence on such subjects by those who might have remembered that, even from his own standpoint, a great Father of the Church had declared that we should not be ashamed to speak of what God was not ashamed to create.

This ignorance may be even more serious when we are concerned with what was often referred to with horror as "perversion." Again and again, where psychic sexual anomalies are conceived, we find patients complaining that their physician has shown no comprehension of their special difficulties, either brushing aside the condition as of no consequence, or else treating them as vicious, wicked, perhaps disgusting persons. It is doubtless the patient's consciousness of this attitude in his doctor which leads many physicians, even of great experience, to declare that psychosexual anomalies are very rare and that they scarcely ever meet with them.

Sex penetrates the whole person; a man's sexual constitution is a part of his general constitution. There is considerable truth in the dictum: "A man is what his sex is." No useful advice can be given concerning the guidance and control of the sexual life unless this is borne in mind. A man may, indeed, be mistaken concerning his own sexual nature. He may be merely passing through a youthful and temporary abnormal stage, to reach eventually a more normal and permanent condition. Or he may, by some undue reaction, have mistaken a subordinate impulse of his nature for the predominant impulse, since we are all made up of various impulses, and the sexually normal man is often a man who holds in control some abnormal impulse. Yet in the main a man's sexual consitution is all-pervading, deep-rooted, permanent, in large measure congenital.

The sexual impulse is, to an incomparably greater degree than the nutritive impulse, held in certain paths and shut out of other paths, by traditional influences of religion, morality, and social convention. There are a few physicians who hold that these influences should be ignored. The physician has nothing to do with morals or with conventions, they argue; he must consider what is for his patient's good and advise him accordingly, without any regard to moral and conventional dictates. That, however, is a short-sighted course of action which leads to many awkward positions, to all kinds of inconsistencies, not seldom to a greater evil than the evil it is sought to cure. For it is the special characteristic of the sexual impulse, as distinct from the nutritive impulse, that its normal gratification involves another person. It leads directly into the social sphere, into the sphere of morals. No one is entitled to seek his own good, or can be advised to seek his good, in any line of action which involves evil to other persons. Nor, indeed, can the patient's own good, in any comprehensive and rational sense, be found in a line of action involving injury to those nearest to him, or a violation of his own conscience and convictions. These considerations are real and vital, interwoven with the traditional social edifice in which we all live, and in innumerable cases they render it impossible for the physician to follow purely biological lines in framing his psychosexual therapeutics. He must often feel himself helpless because the condition before him is largely the result of factors over which he has no control, just as he must feel himself helpless with patients whose condition is mainly the result of overwork and underfeeding which the conditions of their lives have rendered inevitable.

It may be desirable, at the same time, to point out that, while the patient's moral situation cannot be ignored, it would be a mistake to regard the moral situation as absolutely rigid and unchangeable. Morals are in perpetual transition. Much that is regarded as moral today, or at all events as permitted, was fifty years ago regarded as immoral, and was not openly permitted. In harmony with the change in the moral situation, distinguished physicians, with a full sense of responsibility, today openly publish advice in matters of sex which not so very long ago they could not have ventured to give even in private. The physician, alive to the large and splendid part he is entitled to play in working for the welfare of the community, and as medical adviser in the education of the whole people; takes part in this transformation of morals.

The Editors believe that, if Tom Mooney is kept safely and permanently in prison, prosperity will most certainly be restored and the capitalistic system saved to an applauding world.

AESTHETE'S PROGRESS

by ERNEST BOYD

Since the happy days of the early nineteen twenties, when we left him deep in the cult of unintelligibility, settling all intellectual matters with his fists, under the benign influence of gin and applejack, our æsthete has been earnestly endeavoring to reach years of maturity. He has tried to write his autobiography, but has apparently shrunk from the task on realizing how closely his own account of himself and his friends corresponds to a once much-resented imaginary portrait of himself. Or possibly he has been deterred by the fact that it has hitherto been usual for literary men to reserve their reminiscences until such time as their actual literary accomplishments invest their autobiographical proceedings with some air of importance or general interest.

At one moment it looked as if he had found his natural haven as Associate Assistant Instructor in Comparative Literature at the University of Oelrichs, South Dakota. There, like other pilgrims before him, he might find surcease from the frivolities of his last years in college by spreading the gospel of Tradition, in the presence of his defenseless class-room audiences.

With the example of Dr. Stuart P. Sherman before him, he might hope, after some years in the wilderness, to become in New York the highly paid booster of all the authors he had consistenly and most ineffectively denounced. Meanwhile, what opening could be better for the display of that half-baked erudition which is his instinctive delight? Instead of borrowing from Philippe Soupault, Louis Aragon, André Breton and the rest, one merely adopted Pierre Lasserre, Ernest Seillière, Henri Massis, and whatever Right Wing Frenchmen had supplied Professor Irving Babbitt with his so-called ideas. From the New Æstheticism to the New Humanism was not, after all, so far a step, since in both cases the essential thing was to poll-parrot the French, without the faintest regard for the appropriateness of that procedure to American conditions. At least, one could continue to denigrate and misrepresent every outstanding American writer who had faced those conditions.

Yet in another of his moods, our æsthete might be found in the strange predicament of defending against the New Humanists the identical men for whom a few years previously he had not a good word to say. This dilemma was thrust upon him by a desire to convince, if not the public, at least himself, that he and his kind were the object of attack. The result must have surprised his opponents, who found themselves confronted with a book in which not one of their real adversaries was represented. Thus our youthful braves danced their war-dance preparatory to a battle which never occurred, for the simple reason that the enemy was dead, having been slain twenty years or more ago by those who did not even trouble to return to the scene of the slaughter. This display of shadow-boxing left the reading public as cold as they once were to æstheticism. There seemed to be nothing left but to find one's natural level, writing columns for tabloids, or compiling biographies of French writers as remote as possible from those so much admired in Surrealistic and Dadaist days. The only other escape was to Anglo-Catholicism, royalism and classicism, but T. S. Eliot, the man from Missouri, alone took that desperate step.

It looked as if a very thin trickle of literature would soon mark the spot where the æsthetes had fought and drunk and died in imaginary martyrdom. No masterpiece had been born, only an odd volume of collected articles, ranging from the wholly illegible to the politely discursive, from the platitudinous and tortured enunciation of monstrous pedantries to the readable, if wholly unoriginal, essay on the more familiar figures of modern literature. Already there were signs of the youngest generation, indifferent to all the schools and cliques, and actually showing intellectual courage and good sense. Gone were the freak magazines, the fisticuffs at Woodstock-on-Seine, the heroic nights with applejack and memories of drunken brawls in Paris-on-Hudson—for, by this time, geography had lost its objective existence. Even the last brave gesture of *Æsthete, 1925* was so far forgotten as to be omitted from the autobiographical record—if anyone ever heard of that feeblest of all retorts discourteous.

Suddenly the æsthete became conscious of that external, sordid world in which there is so little place for Surrealism, Anglo-Catholicism, New Humanism, the world which supplies the money even for magazines "that make no compromise with the public taste." It was the year of Our Lord Hoover 1930; strange portents haunted this Great People; even the New Republic of Letters was disturbed. Marxian æstheticism saved the day, and our pilgrim found a new lease of life. Here was a brave new world for ingenuous rediscovery and with characteristic naïveté we were informed, in terms of economics, that Queen Anne was dead. First it was necessary to announce that many of the most prominent social heretics have been bourgeois, and so overcome the stigma attaching to one's non-proletarian status. Marx himself, it appeared, was of middle-class birth, likewise Bernard Shaw. Moreover, Marx has not been properly appreciated as an author; he wrote very well. If he had not been interested in more serious things, he might presumably have edited the poetry of John Donne, or written an essay on Villiers de l'Isle Adam. Class-consciouness should not deter us from finding out about the facts of economic life.

Just as the gentleman from Missouri set out to teach the English how best to uphold their institutions, so our æsthetes lecture us on politics and economics. Facts, figures and controversies which were the commonplaces of intellectual life from 1875 to 1914, and which have followed their natural evolution since, are belatedly urged upon our attention, as though we had all been immersed for thirty years in Rimbaud, André Gide or John Dryden, to the exclusion of everything else. Experienced economists are treated with encouraging condescension; Russia receives a coquettish glance of not too enthusiastic recognition; the politicians are flayed with a fervor that implies that at last and for the first time they are confronted by critics who know all. At the same time, these neophytes rarely commit themselves to the study of specific problems of economics. They are as unfamiliar with the Marxian as with the Jevonian Theory of Value.

The Marxian æsthete is as poor today in actual accomplishment as he was in his first incarnation. A few odd jobs of reporting constitute his sole contribution to the solution of the social problem. It is so much easier to pretend to understand James Joyce or e. e. cummings than to grasp the fundamental principles of economics and to apply them to immediate and urgent problems. A spirited refutation of Jevons, or a lucid exposition of the theories of Major C. H. Douglas, is beyond his capacities, and would utterly bewilder his devoted followers. Give them easy and rash generalizations, or give them death. The easier way is to resurrect all the ancient gibes at the bourgeoisie while carefully refraining from any mention of the brilliant thinkers who have seriously dealt with the subject, save by way of disparagement. It is doubtless very necessary to complete one's education; we must all live and learn. But why do it in public? The eager discoveries of the youthful mind make an affecting picture in the seminar, under the benevolent eyes of the professor. The adult layman can hardly be expected to be equally impressed. He is, in fact, bored. Marxian æstheticism cannot save the æsthete, whose ineradicable illusion is that his readers are wholly uneducated and uninformed. Very probably he is right in this assumption, so charitable to himself, but his readers may grow up. Then he will have to go back to the elucidation of Gertrude Stein, where ignorance is bliss to all concerned.

ENGLISH AND AMERICAN PUBLISHERS

by FRANK SWINNERTON

English publishers think that American publishers are slow-witted and unscrupulous. American publishers think that English publishers are dead, but posthumously shifty. That is because American publishers do not say all that they could say, and English publishers, like spiders, sit quite still until something falls into their web. Most publishers, English and American, are honest, simple minded men, with little guile.

American authors do not much care for English publishers. They miss the comforts of home, the kindness, the flattery, the incessant attention which American publishers lavish even upon failures. Few English publishers flatter. Few throw parties or bouquets, or show interest in the arrival of American authors, or cultivate their acquaintance; and there are so many intellectual aristocrats now in English publishing that the trade is becoming a high-brow monopoly and is freezing over. An American highbrow, especially if he is an invert, fares better than an American popular author; for the highbrow has a passport to other highbrows (I say nothing of the invert), whereas the popular author of any race is in England a social pariah.

There is no fuss in English publishing. Only one or two English publishers know how to advertise or to organize sales. The others think sales-organization is vulgar, and are afraid of it. They are also skeptical of its value. One English publisher once said to me: "My dear Swinnerton, you know as well as I do that if a book is going to sell, it sells; and that if it isn't, it doesn't!"

American publishers, on the other hand, organize too obviously, for English taste. Many of them treat books as commodities, as sales propositions. They also organize the social side of publishing on a great scale. I wonder if they are right in doing this? Some of them spend a considerable amount of time and money in entertaining authors, agents, other publishers, particularly authors. When they visit London, they stay at luxury hotels and give parties, see everybody, telegraph, telephone, read everything. When they are gone, other American publishers follow them and do the same thing.

English publishers never stir from home. Only one of them travels about Europe with business as his objective. Few, in spite of all temptations, invitations, and indeed in spite of every practical advisability, have seen New York. They are too sedentary to make the journey, and too incurious about all except approved highbrow authors to stir from their own webs. Besides, American books are brought to them. If they entertain an author it is because his book has sold tremendously, or because they have some definite business proposal to make to him, or because the damned fellow has turned up in London and must be shown some attention. It is never a party. Only two English publishing firms give parties; and one of them is an American concern, while the other is managed by a Jew of vision and daring.

American publishers make more effort to sell books. They have to do so. Distances are great; noise does not carry very far; it is the custom to clap hands and shout high and loud about innumerable books. Every book is a gem, a sure-fire success, better than every other book, a wow. English publishers bring out a book and wait. They leave the shouting to reviewers, who are much condemned for shouting and are accused of being the publishers' touts. If the book sells, the publishers take great credit; if it does not sell, they blame the booksellers or the authors. The English public is more inert than the American public; it reads what it likes, and ignores everything else. This is known as insularity, but in fact it is more good-nature than anything else, for most English people are content to read old books or nothing at all.

English publishers are made unenterprising by this indifference and by the big lending libraries, which dominate the position as far as fiction is concerned. American publishers are made enterprising by the needs of their situation. If they are not energetic they perish. But if a book does not sell in America its sales are smaller than the corresponding English sales. There is a limit to the effectiveness of American organization. Once a book starts it can be sold to the whole American people; but when every book is a wow many wows must be remaindered.

The differences between American and English publishers, so subtle and so many, have now been indicated. One thing they have in common. It is this: if you listen to any American or any English publisher in a confidential mood, you will believe that it has become a physical impossibility to publish books at a profit. Costs are so colossal, overhead charges are so immense, discounts are so iniquitous. You wonder how any publisher can manage to subsist upon his losses. The riddle is unanswerable.

THE LITERARY LIFE

In the seventy years of his life, he produced a succession of fine and worthy books. In his seventy-first year, failing in strength and tired, he produced something negligible. "Hum," derisively proclaimed the critics, "a skyrocket!"

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THE LOR AND THE PROFITS

by RING LARDNER

Mr. Leahy:—If Your Honor please, may I put in a word, and will not take up no nessary time, but merely wish to call Your Honor's tension, and will merely state that here is a trial, though I do not concede for one instant that we are having a trial here, but merely a ex parte, one-sided—what we are holding here is no more and no less than a ex parte—why my client, if Your Honor insist—why no court in the land would uphold, which we expect to prove if Your Honor insist—

The Court:—The stenographer will please repeat the question.

Mr. Leahy:—Just a moment, if Your Honor please, and I may be able to save Your Honor a lot of time. I merely wish to state that here is a ex parte, one-sided proceeding whom the witness, not only the witness himself, but Your Honor himself and the witness himself; yes, and I will go so fur as to include counsel for the committee themself; and if I may be pardoned the seeming personal reference to myself, which I think Your Honor will permit in this case that it is not my own, sole, solitary, unsupported statement or boast or claim, and it is not like I was making some claim that is susceptible from proof, but may be found in the records of the State Bar Association which no doubt Your Honor have the access or can secure same for you at a moment's notice, though I think it is in the minds of every legible person in this state, at least in this room, without consulting no records, but is common hearsay knowledge known to Your Honor and to counsel and to the witness without wasting the time acquired to consult no records; I refer to my graduation laudum cum laude and with praise, and am proud to state at this junction that both I and Your Honor shared with you the proud distinction of both being elected to the Phi Beta Kappa with bells, and without wasting no more time, would like to point out that both I and Your Honor and my client and even counsel for the committee themself, all four of us has occupied at one time another the honor of a judiciary court bench, not only in the municipial, or in other words, owing to the personal experience of we who are involved in this trial—though not for one instant do I concede—in this ex parte—it occurs to me that with all four members familiar with all matters of lor and legal procedure and all matters of parlumentiary lor, it occurs to me that we ought to here and now set a model for the conduct of all future trials—though not for one instant a model for ex parte or other legal procedure in regards to salvage of time and nessary verbage like is usually expended and spent and wasted in these kind of hearings.

The Court:—The stenographer will please repeat the question.

Stenographer: "Mr. Witness, it is charged that on the evening of 1922, you were occupying a room in the Hotel Commodore in New York City and that a Mr. Hematite Scrapple, who drove the bus franchise between Elyria and Cleveland, was there to see you on business. What did he look like?"

Mr. Leahy:—I object to the question on the ground that it is collateral.

The Witness:—I wish I had some.

The Court:—Objection sustained, the witness may answer and the Court won't listen.

The Witness:—Mr. Scrapple, or Tormey, or Hedges—I didn't quite get the name. The hotel register would show.

The Court:—Was he stopping there himself?

The Witness:—Who, Mr. Cranston? I wouldn't know. I never took a tax-payer's name in my life. He may have been anybody; I don't keep stubs. It ought not to be difficult for Your Honor to realize that at certain times of the year—the office always did the ordering unless we were having guests—I asked him to lie down while I took a nap—the hotel register would be the best evidence.

The Court *(addressing Mr. Waldron)*:—Has counsel the register?

Mr. Waldron:—What hotel? What year?

The Court:—Commodore. 1922.

(Mr. Waldron searches his compact, finds the register and flicks it across to the Court's desk).

The Court *(looking through the K's)*:—Here's the name, Tormey, but it's in the K's.

Stenographer *(under her breath)*:—The man was an imposter.

Mr. Leahy:—Your Honor, I object to the stenographer testifying under her breath. If she wants to call Mr. Tormey an imposter, let her say it out loud.

Stenographer:—You have quick ears.

Mr. Leahy:—You're no Mona Lisa yourself!

The Court:—The witness may proceed.

The Witness:—If this was the same fellow, Cranston—there may be a hundred Cranstons, all taxpayers—Somebody spoke up and said we ought to give a banquet—I don't recall if we gave one or not. A calendar would be the best evidence.

The Court *(addressing Mr. Waldron)*:—Has counsel a calendar?

Mr. Waldron:—What year? What month? What day?

The Court:—Any time there was a banquet.

(Mr. Waldron tears off a portion of the calendar and flicks it across to the Court's desk).

The Court *(looking at the portion of calendar)*:—This says September 17, but doesn't say there was a banquet.

Stenographer *(under her breath)*:—It doesn't say there wasn't one, either.

Mr. Leahy:—Doesn't it?

Stenographer:—I'm asking *you*.

The Court:—The witness may proceed.

The Witness:—All I recall about this fellow Hedges is that he wanted a cigarette. He said he didn't usually run out—I said, "It's oke with me if you walk out, only don't make it much later." He laughed.

The Court:—What at?

Mr. Leahy:—If Your Honor please,—

The Witness:—I told him I didn't have a cigarette—he asked if I didn't have a part of one—I told him I never kept stubs—he laughed again.

The Court:—What at?

Mr. Leahy:—If Your Honor please, some people will laugh at a thing who other people wouldn't see that but that what there wasn't that what the people that laughed was laughing at what, or in other words that what—

The Witness:—This fellow promised that he would go if I would buy him a pack of cigarettes and I said I would call up and get a pack and sign for them—I never carry money on my person—when I get some, I always put it in a safe—

The Court:—Do you always have a safe wherever you happen to be when you get money?

The Witness:—Well, Your Honor—I only feel safe—my dear old mother, he looks like a safe—This fellow Thorpe said he could call up and get a whole cartoon of cigarettes and sign for them, only hotels always sock you fifteen cents a pack whether you buy just a pint or a whole cartoon.

Stenographer *(under her breath)*:—I love Mickey Mouse.

The Witness:—This fellow said he would call up and get a bell hopper and send him to a Bank of United States Cigar Store and pay cash for a whole cartoon—only he didn't have anything smaller than a century note.

The Court:—A century note?

The Witness:—That's a letter you write on the train going to Chicago.

The Court:—Well, if he could sign for cigarettes at the Commodore, he must have been stopping there.

The Witness:—The cigar stand's daily ledger would be the best evidence of that.

The Court *(addressing Mr. Waldron)*:—Does counsel happen to have the daily ledger of the Hotel Commodore's cigar stand for 1922? If so, will counsel kindly produce any and all charges made during that year against a man named Scrapple or Tormey or Hedges or Cranston or any similar name?

(Mr. Waldron borrows Mr. Leahy's Phi Beta key, opens a locket, takes out the daily ledger of the Hotel Commodore's cigar stand for 1922 and flicks it across to the Court's desk.)

Mr. Waldron:—Will Your Honor kindly note that I am offering these documents not as charges, but merely as an analysis.

Mr. Leahy:—And that's what the Commodore will be they was.

The Court:—Didn't the fellow pay his bills?

Mr. Leahy:—Listen Your Honor, the bell hopper that showed him which was the head of the bed is still suing him for a dime.

HAYSIANA

Not long ago, the internal moving picture censorship declared itself, to the delight of the clergy, the women's clubs and the Minsky brothers, to be against the further film commercialization of sex. A sharp eye, it was vociferously announced, would in the future be exercised to see to it that all sex would be treated, if at all, *pianissimo*. The hot stuff, as it is known to the vulgar, was done with, taboo. Under the happy circumstances, we therefore take the liberty of quoting from some sample film advertisements in the recent public press:

"Week-End Marriage"—"The most sensational love problem that ever faced a generation."

"Westward Passage"—"The story of a wife who dared to wonder if fidelity is everything in life."

"Forgotten Commandments" — "She's yours! She's beautiful, fiery, white-skinned, red-blooded! All she wants is love! Take her! Forget her husband! A rubber stamp gave her to him—a rubber stamp will give her to you. Any woman for any man. . . ."

"Hat Check Girl"—"A miss who missed nothing. She knew everything . . . a new slant on the wise women of the White Way."

"Born Wild"—"A girl untamed, unashamed, *free*. . . ."

"Havoc"—"Taunted by her smile, haunted by her kisses, men lied, stole, betrayed and killed in an unholy struggle for the soul of this woman."

"Six Hours to Live"—"Crammed with the thrills of passions and unquenchable longings."

"Bought on Time"—"A pent-house blonde who loved in instalments and wouldn't go off the gold standard."

"Easy"—"Spicy drama of a woman-about-town."

"Red Dancer"—"Silken siren, ruthless with men."

"Glamorous"—"Footloose beauty seeking men and money amid frenzied pent-house parties."

"Forgotten Kisses"—"A woman of the world who made a pastime of love."

"Thunder Below"—"A throbbing, vibrant story of a love-torn woman in a lonely colony of white men. She trades honor for 'love'."

"Mazda Lane"—"Where girls with wishbones wear sables and girls with backbones wear rags."

"Miracle Night"—"Dares to tell you of those things that slumber in the soul of a woman."

"Nurse Smith"—"A drama of desire greater than a woman's will!"

"Beautifully Trimmed"—"A high-riding story of a blue-flame vamp whose red lips laughed at life."

THE IRISH CENSORSHIP

by LIAM O'FLAHERTY

During the Eucharistic Congress recently held in Dublin, I was staying in a small Kerry town. It has a population of two thousand people and fifty-three public houses. Like almost every other Irish provincial town, it is incredibly dirty and sordid to look upon. In the long back street inhabited by the proletariat I came across human excrement at every second step. There was no vestige of culture in the place. The three local priests were sour and secretive fellows, who confined their activities to the prevention of fornication, dancing and reading. The only pastime permitted to the males was drinking in the fifty-three public houses. The females wandered about with a hungry expression in their eyes. Shortly after my arrival, the priests of the diocese held a mass dinner at my hotel, to devise ways and means for getting me out of the county, as a menace to faith and morals; but without any success.

Then the Eucharistic Congress came along and the populace, exalted by some extraordinary fanaticism, decorated the town with bunting. In the proletarian slum, several altars were erected in the open air. Around these altars some people recited the rosary at night, while others played accordions, danced and drank stout.

However no attempt was made to remove the dung from the streets, nor any fraction of the dirt which desecrated the walls of the houses and the floors of the taverns. I walked up and down the town, pointing from the bunting to the pavement and saying: "Bunting, dung. Dung, bunting." It was considered sacrilegious.

Unclean offal of any sort, whether in my neighborhood or in the minds of people with whom I have association, is strongly distasteful to me. So is poverty, ungracious tyranny and ignoble suffering. In my work I have been forced in honesty to hold up a mirror to life as I found it in my country. And, of necessity, the mirror shows the dung about the pretty altars. So a censorship has been imposed upon my work, since it is considered sacrilegious by the Irish Church that I should object to the sordid filth around the altars.

The tyranny of the Irish Church and its associate parasites, the upstart Irish bourgeoisie, the last posthumous child from the wrinkled womb of European capitalism, maintains itself by the culture of dung, superstition and ignoble poverty among the masses. And the censorship of literature was imposed, lest men like me could teach the Irish masses that contact with dung is demoralizing, that ignorance is ignoble and that poverty, instead of being a passport to Heaven, makes this pretty earth a monotonous Hell. The soutaned bullies of the Lord, fortressed in their dung-encrusted towns, hurl the accusation of sexual indecency at any book that might plant the desire for civilization and freedom in the breasts of their wretched victims.

So they have set up a censorship of books in Ireland, and now at Irish ports, whose sole export is porter and men of genius, imported literature which is the product of Irish genius is seized and burned as dangerous contraband. And so tortured Ireland, which a few years ago asked for and received the sympathy of the world's intellectuals, now shows herself as a surly, sick bitch biting the hand that fed her.

But it's not true of Ireland, nor of the mass of Irishmen and Irishwomen. Slaves cannot be blamed for the vices of their masters. I am censored and abhorred by the illiterate ruffians who control Irish life at present. There is hardly a single newspaper in Ireland that would dare print anything I write. There is hardly a bookshop in Ireland that would dare show my books in its windows. There is hardly a library that would not be suppressed for having my books on its shelves. Outside Dublin not a single organization would dare ask me to address them. Yet I claim that Ireland is the only country where I feel of any consequence as a writer. It is the only country where I feel the youth and freshness of Spring among the people, where I feel at one with my mates, where I sing with their singing and weep with their weeping, where I feel that I am a good workman doing a useful job and honored for my craft.

Ireland is no land of barbarians and there are no people in the world who love art and beauty more than the Irish. But alas! Our little island has been stricken with a triple mange of friars, gombeen men and poverty. The soutaned witch-doctors have spread terror among our simple folk and, as one goes through the country, it is pathetic to meet in every little town and village timid, whispering individuals who say, "It's terrible here. I can't get anything to read on account of the priests. Have you got any of your books you could lend me?" In the same way, I was told by an eminent London publisher that he receives bundles of letters from sexually-starved Irishwomen, asking for bawdy books. Booklegging may soon become on a small scale quite as profitable as the prohibition of alcohol made bootlegging in America.

Bawdy books! Bawdy houses! Booze! On these three forms of vulgar entertainment there seemed to be no censorship whatsoever during the Eucharistic Congress in Dublin. The town was wide open all night and every night. Then the mob went back home to purify themselves by scratching their backs against hair shirts. The militant puritans in Ireland have, in my opinion, staged their last great parade. Before very long they'll be all hurled into the clean Atlantic, together with their censorship, their dung, their bawdy books, their bawdy houses and their black booze. Then we can once more in Ireland have wine and love and poetry; become a people famed, as of old, "for beauty and amorousness."

THE THEATRE

by GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

In any inquiry into the decline of audience-interest in the present-day American theatre, one factor—often esoterically discussed but because of its delicate nature withheld from print—cannot much longer remain out of type. It is a phenomenon that has appeared in the theatre within the last four or five years and that it has been instrumental in reducing to no little degree not only the persuasiveness of numerous plays and musical shows but the reaction, albeit often unknowingly, of their customers has for some time now not been lost upon certain of the producers and all of the critics. I allude to the increasing number of women players who are of the sexual disposition of the Aeolian-Greek island colonizers.

In the last few years numerous women of this Mytilene cast have come to the local stage and, with their quickly felt, if not always consciously recognized, masculine hardness and chill undertone, have made subtly ineffective and even ridiculous the plays and shows in which they have appeared. Love scenes have missed all fire and have become indistinguishable from those played in college shows by boys dressed up as girls. Glamour and sex appeal, those two often critically disparaged but all-important assets of the theatre, have gone by the board. And musical shows, once of a piece with monkey glands, have been converted into so much saltpeter.

It is obviously impossible to set down names, places and dates, but it might easily be done. Anyone who knows the local theatre would have no difficulty in doing so. Such a catalogue would suggest to many audiences, even if they have not realized before what it was that failed to inveigle them in the case of a certain play or show, the very probable nature of the phenomenon that brought about their emotional disablement. Such a catalogue would recall to them a certain Shakespearean revival whose passionate beauty had all the compelling fervor of an ice-bag, a comedy of wistful love with the flavor of Berlin's Monokoi night-club, a sentimental French play whose heroine needed only a pair of trousers to double as the hero, a musical revue whose leading danseuse made a bag of nails seem as soft, in comparison, as a bath sponge, a fantasy from the Italian that took on, in its delicate leading feminine rôle, the aspect of a speakeasy bouncer dressed by Callot, an Ibsen revival whose star actress would have driven old Henrik straight into the arms of the chatelaine of the *Für Damen* at the Café Luitpold, a tender little comedy in which, when the leading woman kissed the leading man, he obviously felt like an androgyne, and still another exhibit in which one of the conspicuous women members of the cast played a scene of amorous passion with the fainting male actor as if he were a leper.

I appreciate that there is something refractorily comical about any such subject as is here being exposed to print. But there is nothing comical about it when one considers the plays that are being castrated and the box-office, already so troubled, that on many occasions is being forsaken. It is, plainly enough, not a case of morals; it is simply a case of unfitness for certain jobs. These women who bask in latitude 39° North, longitude 26° 20′ East, may be excellent workers in other fields of human enterprise, but they do not belong on the stage of warm, throbbing and convincing drama nor on the sex-appeal music show platform. Audiences, with their vague dissatisfaction, their inability—with all the willingness in the world—to respond to the dramatist's invoked emotions, and their discontent with many an otherwise at least partly meritorious play, have proved and are proving that. Audiences may not know, but they feel. And even though not clearly knowing, they yet feel that something is wrong. You cannot cast Sappho as Cinderella, or as Juliet.

In a recent issue of the programmes distributed in the New York theatres, one read, in the pages devoted weekly to the well-known figures of the theatre's yesterday, this paragraph:

"In Hyde Park, one day early in this century, Viola Allen remarked on the absence of butterflies (or so, at least the story goes) and her companion immediately set about having things fixed. On the following morning a great flock of the dainty creatures was let loose in the park and by the next year a butterfly farm had been established and thousands of butterflies were being released in parks all through London. Miss Allen was that sort of woman. Her success, according to one reviewer, was largely one of personality, of charm, of that womanliness that always is content to go about in skirts'."

The theatre today hasn't any pressing need of butterflies, but it could stand a lot more women like Viola Allen.

PROSPERITY

It has lately been the apparent decision of the movie news-reels to encourage the American people in the belief that prosperity is no longer merely around the corner but that it is here with an upper-case H and bells on its toes. The technique of encouragement has taken the form of flashing on the screen pictures showing the return of hundreds of men to work in various shops and factories. The aforesaid pictures, however, lack a certain share of conviction upon one's scrutinizing them closely and observing that the men are dressed in the styles of eight or ten years ago and, further, that they always seem to be "returning to work" just after lunch-time.

THE DAY OF SURFEIT

by THEODORE DREISER

This is the day of surfeit. Surfeit not only of numbers but of variants of notions or ideas of life, no one of which has the least reality or ultimate import. I refer to various brands and styles of philosophy, religion, social and political beliefs, to say nothing of ideas of duty, honor, responsibility, what you will. Immense and increasing numbers of people have made for immense and increasing numbers of notions, pro and con, and all their moods and struggles and wars, which have at last produced in almost all over the age of fifteen or sixteen a sense of meaningless and almost tideless mass that reduces individuality to impossibility and achievement to a dull result of average competition. Almost of so-called civilization—races, nations, states—one might cry, as we do in games at times, "Wipe the slate and start all over!"

There may have been a time when ships returning from Salamis, or runners from Marathon, or a Roman general with his tigers and captives from Scythia were occasions of a great fever of excitement, comparable in our day to the return of Lindbergh from France. But that was in the truly long ago, when thrills were thrills because they related to an almost unexplored and mysterious planet, to say nothing of an unexplored and more mysterious universe. Today we have not one but a thousand explorers of the universe. They are in every laboratory, before every telescope, microscope and spectrum. The news, like the stock market reports, is for daily consumption. Even Lindbergh's adventure has been duplicated and repeated until one more Atlantic flight is about as thrilling as one more Hollywood movie.

There was a time, in the day of Aristophanes, of Shakespeare, of Molière, perhaps, when a play was something of an event. It spelled, for the seeking and unsurfeited mind of the few who could be said to have minds, the excitement and delight that comes with the new, the unexpected, the strange. Now, even one more play of superior observation, psychology or mirth, if there be one such, is still defeated and deprived of great import by competition and surfeit of the tawdry and the meretricious disguised in the habiliments of masterpieces and dished up by purely mercenary interests to the accompaniment of the drums of the advertising office, the squealing of the fifes of the suborned critic, and the general fanfare of the numskull who is intrigued by noise. A surfeit of mediocre plays, as everyone knows today, has at last succeeded in wearying the room-full who could really enjoy a good one. They expect nothing and get nothing.

Too many boats and trains taking people around the world. Too many worlds equipped exactly like every other, with boats and trains and hotels and advertising agents, until at last there is scarcely a world to which one would repair with either dreams or zest. And in so far as the jungle, wherever it is, is concerned, not a sunrise on any jungle today but reveals a zany band of moving picture directors and actor adventurers, with guns and cameras and machine guns, staging stale and already wearisome scenes with trained tigers and captive and cowed snakes and rhinoceri, while hired Coney-Islandized natives and their children dance about and supply color. Surfeit until, at last, one more jungle, one more toothy lion or forward rushing rhinoceros is as thrill-less as a glass of sarsaparilla.

In the fields of the practical and the necessary, the problems and labors of our general social organizations, what enormous and plaguing surfeits! And, in consequence, pathetic and unescapable defeats. A few years ago (and not so many at that) it was possible to contemplate at most two or three great navies, England, America, Germany, and ponder romantically upon their ultimate clashes. But today, with a half dozen or more threatening each other, and mere commonplace trade to fight over, admirals and rear-admirals and captains are as common as flies. In fact, one more gang of staff officers parading before a smartly polished regiment or ship's company ready for inspection is about as dull and tame and commonplace as one more king or pope or president saluting or blessing a multitude concerning which he does not really give a damn. In truth, any peanut vender or any organ grinder is more interesting because decidedly more rare and picturesque. And as for the plague-like air forces of the world, our skies are full of wasp-like airplanes; yet those who saw the Wright brothers at Kittyhawk or over New York saw all. The rest is surfeit.

The same with books. Their earlier paucity and their present stupendous and meaningless multiplicity. Drug stores, barns, warehouses, auction shops, all full; and all possible readers out automobiling. As for the newspaper and the magazine, thanks be, they have all died. What remains is a mud storm of advertising organs, commercial, political, religious, which all but the dub and the numskull recognize for what they are: hand-bills advertising nostrums for sale: political, religious, social, moral as well as material. In fact, everything is for sale. But the leading thing they sell is the public.

But worst of all, as I have said, is the surfeit of people, spawned without thought or plan, aimless and absurd, breeding without mental conception of, let alone preparation for, the problems involved. The aimless, drifting shoals, the murky, decaying, putrid wreckage in the bays and inlets and estuaries along the shores of life. Yet with no social or organic thought put upon the matter by anyone, in state, nation or the world at large.

In consequence, and constructed thus, too many cities without plan, without any sane social or eco-

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(*Continued from Page 2*)

nomic organization. A few, usually the cunning, not the wise or the æsthetic, allowed in a portion of every city to achieve something in the way of ugly, unæsthetic self-indulgence. And the rest, bound up in warrens, so dull, so depleted, so confined, so starveling as to serve only as evidence of the futility of the millions and of all so-called civilization, or law, or justice, or mind. And worse, with a surfeit of the botched, the futile, the ineffective, the miserable, has come a surfeit of the necessary commonplace and defective things by which they live and have their being—cheap and defective clothes, cheap and defective food, cheap and defective factories, houses, places of assumed entertainment, wretched and even repulsive places of worship, and—last but not least—cheap and defective leaders and political overlords. And, as though that were not sufficient, the surfeit of asylums, penitentiaries, misnamed "homes" for the detention and control of all the affected and afflicted that spring so naturally from these circumstances. But no surfeit of ideas or strong and active revulsions which might lead to a modification, if not a complete solution, of all this.

Yet in wild nature, of course, unclogged and untrammelled by the so-called wisdom of man, one does find a solution of sorts. It is the very rugged one of the law of the survival of at least the strongest, the healthiest, the most cunning. And in no species or tribe of either the insects, the birds or the mammals, does one find hordes of the botched, the half-fed, the half-clothed or the half-alive. The strong unerringly pounce on the weak, or the rough droughts, storms, colds and inconsiderate brutalities of nature generally dispose of all but the most effective. And they remain, in their thus confined numbers, strong to live and enjoy the wild contestful world about them.

But under the banner of so-called increasing wisdom and social organization of man, we have marched—to what—to where? Malthus declared that it was inevitable that population tended to overtake and outrun the means of subsistence. Yet that this is true is now widely doubted. For we see that through industrialism we can as readily have a surfeit of food as we can of consumers of food. Otherwise, why should we be destroying lakes of coffee, mountains of cotton, corn, wheat and, worse, allowing to stand idle and subject to the ravages of non-use and decay the vast equipment of machinery in both its manufacturing and transportation forms? It is to no point to add that while this is going on millions of people starved, or half-fed, or half-clothed, or half-entertained, stand and wait. They could be fed and clothed and still these mountains of things be destroyed.

The solution, if any, must lie in adjusting, not haphazardly but accurately, the number of those who are to be allowed to live and intelligently and accurately share the benefits of such social organization and economy as is possible on this earth. And yet that is not to say that the number already here is to be ruthlessly and arbitrarily and hence selectively decimated, but rather that the right to reproduce, together with the right to continue life, should be more intelligently and realistically considered. Personally, I have always held that it should not be left to the botched and the deficient to reproduce at all. That the insane everywhere, and regardless of all emotional and religious concepts to the contrary, should be extinguished is obvious. That a child's right to live should not only depend upon its condition at birth, but its mental and physical condition at ten years of age is also plain. Previous to that, though, should come intelligent physical and mental supervision by (if such a thing can be conceived) a realistic Government determined upon the physical and mental happiness, as well as fitness, of the limited number in every state. The day of the religionist and the ignoramus generally, inside the home and out, who has had the control of the child, the forming of his views and the training of his mind and body should be, if it is not yet, over.

Lastly, if there are those who argue that here you waive the problem of the semi-defective genius who is later to shine and make the world better and brighter, my answer is that if that be true, then we are here and now contemplating a world that must have been made better and brighter by defectives, for lo, these thousands of years. But if that *is* not true, how comes it that the present scene is as it is? The defective and deficient should be disposed of and the internal economics of the state should be so arranged as to reach each remaining atom with not only the necessities of his life but all of the pleasures and developments and satisfactions open to any member of the state.

If I am to be told that this is a fantasy of the mind, a Plato's Republic, a More's Utopia, my reply is that nature is jammed with successful illustrations of the argument I present. In fact, I offer every living, functioning organism from the amœba up to and including man himself—man the individual, the fly, the potato, the lion, Plato, Charles Darwin, and Mr. Rockefeller. For all either are or have been living and moving illustrations of an interior and closed state composed of harmoniously co-operating units or cells, each one of which has been and is in all existing bodies today, being carefully and continuously looked after by a central control. But this control is not here and now functioning in regard to man in his exterior organized-government form. Plainly in so far as his outer social and economic life is concerned, he is being left to his own devices. And as yet his own mental economy has not sufficed to effect a satisfactory social state for himself.

Either man needs to give serious and constructive thought to this or he should return to God in prayer. Until this happens his state will certainly remain just what it is now, an anachronism and a shame.

THE GENTEEL TRADITION IN SEX

by BRANCH CABELL

An author may have his hobby: and should the demented fellow elect (as Keats has approximately phrased it) to sway about upon his hobby-horse and think it Pegasus, there is no great harm done. I do not know that upon the whole he is much happier for having this sort of equestrianship observed and applauded by the cognoscenti who collect books and esteem especially those first editions wherefrom has been removed no one of the misprints. I am sure that an author is often thrust into a most delicate predicament when he finds his books valued not only for their typographical errors but for still other qualities wherein he does not desire pre-eminence.

For do you but observe his plight! All courtesy is a draft to be honored in its own coinage. He could prefer, certainly, some compliment of a more congenial and more rational nature. Even so, the applause has a pleasant ring; and the applauder seems sincere. Not every one of us is ready in such circumstances to snub adulation, as did Wellington so perfectly, with the crisp reply, "Don't be a fool!" In fact, to make just that reply to a dissertation upon one's own genius would appear uncivil; and yet one really is tempted to make it, now and again, to the undesired disciple.

I voice this plaint because when some years ago the Society for the Suppression of Vice first brought me before the public as the writer of "an obscene and lewd and lascivious book," its well-meant endeavors established me in far too wide estimation as an approved pundit of pornography. The legend lives on, in astounding tenaciousness, without requiring any least further nurture; and I still suffer from the admirers thus attracted. This very morning, for example, I received a letter from yet another "book collector." After the customary encomia of my writings, which ordinarily bespeak the asking of a more or less unreasonable favor by return post, he requests me to select from my complete works "the most lively passage of an erotic nature" from which a drawing could be made to serve as his book plate.

It is not in the least his fault that, about the corners, my mouth is still faintly frothing. The man honestly intends a compliment; he writes too as a person of fair culture; and yet, somehow, to find my books regarded as a thesaurus of all fornications does not seem to me utterly complimentary. I have not ever learned to think of myself as a connoisseur of copulation: and when I receive, as I continue to receive, some dozen letters a month (the most of them from professed "book collectors") fiddling with this eternal stale theme, I do not love all my professed admirers. I love, rather, the first Duke of Wellington.

It would be well, I reflect, could these morons and young bitches take coition more quietly. I admit, though, that this task has always baffled Americans as a nation, and that American literature in especial has remained singularly unaffected by the persiflage of the drawing-room. That seems particularly true to-day when, under the lime-light of a perfervid and defiant "frankness," the genital organs are being put through their limited repertory in so very many quite inexplicably popular books. The shrill emphasis and the visible excitement of the author hereabouts (just as formerly did the abashed utterance and the virginally vague hints of the author hereabouts) really do lead you to surmise that his social advantages have, in either instance, been somewhat restricted. In neither instance, I mean, is it in the least the tone of the contemporaneous gentry, to whom these matters have always seemed merely amusing.

One encounters nowadays so many scathing dicta as to "the genteel tradition" in American letters that I rather hesitate to suggest that the true "genteel tradition" has at all times remained unrepresented there. I content myself with pointing out that the majority at any rate of our writers have been (to employ a quaintly old-fashioned term) not quite ladies and gentlemen. I say only that to speak of any sexual relationship has, I think, for this reason always flurried American writers, either to the extreme of regarding the matter as undiscussable, or to the other extreme of regarding coition as a very gravely important matter, such as well justified coarse speaking and a deal of heavy-handed sociology.

Yet all the while, I believe (but beyond doubt, during the last thirty-five years), their relatively civilized social betters, in unliterary drawing-rooms, have spoken of sex as a mildly pleasant joke and have continued to discuss its gymnastics in this particular aspect. Such, I can assure the literati, has for a long while been the attitude of the upper classes. That is the true "genteel tradition" as to all erotic matters; it is a tradition not yet represented in American letters; and it is also a tradition which causes me to fidget before those who gravely collect my books as erotica. I designed those books for quite other ends.

SERVANTS OF GOD
No. 1

Columbus, Ohio, Press Dispatch:

Following a dispute with his congregation due to a commercial broadcast of talkie reviews put on the air weekly by WAIU, Rabbi Jacob Tarshish of Temple Israel has decided to quit the temple rabbinate and devote his entire time to broadcasting, principally reviews. The rabbi's programs contain brief reviews of current talkies and chatter on Hollywood. They are sponsored by a glass company.

THE PINES AND THE BORERS

by LINCOLN STEFFENS

The pines of Carmel are dying and the twig-borers, who live on the trees, are troubled. They ask but they cannot tell one another what the matter is or what to do about it. They honestly do not know. Once, when they were convinced that casual conversation was a failure, they called a conference to examine deliberately and consider formally the pressing problem which to them and to the trees was a matter of life or death.

The delegates met in solemn session in one of the most populous, developed and depressed of the pines; they heard the wisest sayings of their best minds. In vain. These most practical of the troubled bugs blamed the trees and deplored their unresponsiveness to the borers' industry; they blamed the weather; they blamed the birds; they blamed the other insects who competed with the borers. But there was nothing to do about the birds and the weather, the other bugs or the trees themselves. The only comfort they gathered was from some despised theoretical delegates who observed that there were cycles of good times and bad times and who recalled that in the past other forests of pines with their borers had risen and fallen. The great majority and their leaders seized upon this great historical truth. It was fate and, therefore, might change. They must stand fast to meet together whatever came with faith and hope, courage, work and, above all, the stout-hearted among them must suppress the birds and other trouble makers who wanted to ask all the time what it was that caused the cycles and the fate of pine-tree life.

The conference was about to quit when some idiotic birds discovered and lighted upon the swarming tree and sang or twittered a vacant refrain that sounded like

"*You* did it, you *did* it, you did."

That broke up the conference. In confusion, haste and rage, the delegates appointed a fact-finding commission and adjourned.

The Editors are charmed to learn from Federico Vittore Nardelli's "L'Uomo Segreto" that Luigi Pirandello was faithful to his wife from January, 1894 to January. 1918.

REQUIRED READING

"Why has Casanova attracted so little attention in English? So far as I know there is only Havelock Ellis's essay, and that does not go very far into the subject."—Edmund Wilson in *The New Republic.*

Required reading: Charles Whibley: *Literary Portraits.* London: 1904: Arthur Symons: *Figures of Several Centuries.* London: 1916.

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"In spite of his elegant lucidity, he [Anatole France] never made sense."—Edmund Wilson in *The New Republic.*

Required reading: M. Gaffiot: *Les Théories d'Anatole France sur l'organisation sociale de son temps.* Paris: 1928; Lewis Piaget Shanks: *Anatole France: the Mind and the Man.* New York: 1932.

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"Creative writers continue to struggle with a grammar handed down to them by philologists of another age. There is an urgent need for revising the archaic rules which strangle expression to an intolerable degree."—Eugene Jolas in *transition.*

Required reading: Otto Jespersen: *Growth and Structure of the English Language.* Leipzig: 1905.

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"*transition* believes in chtonian grammar."—Eugene Jolas in *transition.*

Required reading: George Philip Krapp: *The Knowledge of English.* New York: 1927.

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"*transition* does not believe in the hoary imbecility of correct English'."Eugene Jolas in *transition.*

Required reading: Fowler's *Modern English Usage.* London: 1926.

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"The new picture, 'Strange Interlude,' ought to be a success, and, with deep respect for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, who produced it, I offer my best wishes. It was a difficult job, and, according to report, the difficulties are brilliantly overcome."—Gilbert Seldes in *The New York Evening Journal.*

Required reading: New York Herald-Tribune, New York Evening Sun, New York Evening Post, World-Telegram. Also, Eugene O'Neill: *Strange Interlude.* New York, 1928.

* * *

"He [Whitman] must be an expansionist *à l'outrance,* as Thoreau was a protestant *à l'outrance.*"—Henry Seidel Canby in *Classical Americans.*

Required reading: Fowler's *Modern English Usage.* London: 1926. pp. 17 and 28.

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"[Charles Louis] Philippe died 'before 1910' and this ['Bubu of Montparnasse'] is presumably the first of his novels to be translated."—Robert Cantwell in *The New Republic.*

Required Reading: **Charles Louis Philippe: *A Simple Story.* Translated by Agnes Kendrick Gray. New York, 1925. *La Nouvelle Revue Française,* 15 February, 1910, special number devoted to Charles Louis Philippe.**

MEMORANDA ON MASKS

by EUGENE O'NEILL

Not masks for all plays, naturally. Obviously not for plays conceived in purely realistic terms. But masks for certain types of plays, especially for the new modern play, as yet only dimly foreshadowed in a few groping specimens, but which must inevitably be written in the future. For I hold more and more surely to the conviction that the use of masks will be discovered eventually to be the freest solution of the modern dramatist's problem as to how—with the greatest possible dramatic clarity and economy of means—he can express those profound hidden conflicts of the mind which the probings of psychology continue to disclose to us. He must find some method to present this inner drama in his work, or confess himself incapable of portraying one of the most characteristic preoccupations and uniquely significant, spiritual impulses of his time. With his old—and more than a bit senile!—standby of realistic technique, he can do no more than, at best, obscurely hint at it through a realistically disguised surface symbolism, superficial and misleading. But that, while sufficiently beguiling to the sentimentally mystical, is hardly enough. A comprehensive expression is demanded here, a chance for eloquent presentation, a new form of drama projected from a fresh insight into the inner forces motivating the actions and reactions of men and women, (a new and truer characterization, in other words)—a drama of souls, and the adventures of "free wills," with the masks that govern them and constitute their fates.

For what, at bottom, is the new psychological insight into human cause and effect but a study in masks, an exercise in unmasking? Whether we think the attempted unmasking has been successful, or has only created for itself new masks, is of no importance here. What is valid, what is unquestionable, is that this insight has uncovered the mask, has impressed the idea of mask as a symbol of inner reality, upon all intelligent people of to-day; and I know they would welcome the use of masks in the theatre as a necessary, dramatically revealing, new convention, and not regard them as any "stunty" resurrection of archaic props.

This was strikingly demonstrated for me in practical experience by "The Great God Brown," which ran in New York for eight months, nearly all of that time in Broadway theatres—a play in which the use of masks was an integral part of the theme. There was some misunderstanding, of course. But so is there always misunderstanding in the case of every realistic play that attempts to express anything beyond what is contained in a human-interest newspaper story. In the main, however, "The Great God Brown" was accepted and appreciated by both critics and public—a fairly extensive public, as its run gives evidence.

I emphasize this play's success because the fact that a mask drama, the main values of which are psychological, mystical and abstract, could be played in New York for eight months, has always seemed to me a more significant proof of the deeply responsive possibilities in our public than anything that has happened in our modern theatre before or since.

(2)

Looked at from even the most practical standpoint of the practising playwright, the mask *is* dramatic in itself, *has always* been dramatic in itself, *is* a proven weapon of attack. At its best, it is more subtly, imaginatively, suggestively dramatic than any actor's face can ever be. Let anyone who doubts this study the Japanese Nō masks, or Chinese theatre masks, or African primitive masks—or right here in America the faces of the big marionettes Robert Edmond Jones made for the production of Stravinsky's "Œdipus," or Benda's famous masks, or even photographs of them.

(3)

Dogma for the new masked drama.—One's outer life passes in a solitude haunted by the masks of others; one's inner life passes in a solitude hounded by the masks of oneself.

(4)

With masked mob a new type of play may be written in which the Mob as King, Hero, Villain, or Fool will be the main character—The Great Democratic Play!

(5)

Why not give all future Classical revivals entirely in masks? "Hamlet," for example. Masks would liberate this play from its present confining status as exclusively a "star vehicle." We would be able to see the great drama we are now only privileged to read, to identify ourselves with the figure of Hamlet as a symbolic projection of a fate that is in each of us, instead of merely watching a star giving us his version of a great acting rôle. We would even be able to hear the sublime poetry as the innate expression of the spirit of the drama itself, instead of listening to it as realistic recitation—or ranting—by familiar actors.

(6)

Consider Goethe's "Faust," which, psychologically speaking, should be the closest to us of all the Classics. In producing this play, I would have Mephistopheles wearing the Mephistophelean mask of the face of Faust. For is not the whole of Goethe's truth *for our time* just that Mephistopheles and Faust are one and the same—*are* Faust?

AMERICAN JURISPRUDENCE

Atlanta, Georgia, dispatch to the New York *Evening Post:* Clinton S. Carnes, who drew a five-year term for being short $953,000 in accounts as Baptist Home Mission Board treasurer, awaits assignment following plea. In another cell at Fulton Tower is Robert Smith, Negro, sent up for four years for chicken stealing.

WHEN I WANT A DRINK

by CLARENCE DARROW

Again we have with us the righteous, intent on taking the pleasure out of life: they who are against sin and sinners, and who can spot the wicked one as far as they can see or hear him, the sinner who seems happy. To the righteous sin and joy are the same, or, at least, close friends. No one who values heaven should have any bliss on earth.

One of the passions of the righteous is saving souls. Another in the field of enforced salvation is destroying saloons. The Anti-Saloon League, the W.C.T.U. and the Association for Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals of the Methodist Episcopal Church are raising objections again, making timid persons stop, look and listen. Possibly they may let an American citizen take a drink after awhile, or even sell one, but—the saloon must be abolished forever!

Now and then I want a drink. And when I want a drink I would like to walk into a suitable place and order it openly, decently, publicly, without whispering or pretending that I am doing something wicked. I don't care if the place is to be called a café, or restaurant, or something else. I have many gratifying memories of various places where friends and companions gathered and liquor was served and sipped while an agreeable feeling radiated through our bodies as we discussed the affairs of the community and the problems of life and death. All this is to be taken away even though somehow we may be allowed to take a drink.

If I am permitted to get liquor, how and where is it to be served? I have no intention of going into the business of making beverages; neither would I dream of selling the stuff. Like Omar Khayyam, "I wonder often what the vintners buy one half so precious as the stuff they sell."

In the old days I went to the saloon and found little to criticize in the place. To be sure, I picked my saloon, as I do my grocery and, somehow, I chose different saloons at different times to fit various moods, which is one of the advantages that I miss today.

What is a saloon anyhow? In America it is a place where liquor is sold to the consumer, usually to be absorbed on the premises. In the old days there were great differences in saloon-keepers as there were, and are, in restaurant-keepers, and politicians, and Christians. I object to the Anti-Saloon League and the W.C.T.U. and others reluctantly allowing me to have a drink, and then telling me where I may get it, and take it.

If I want a drink I don't want it for "medicinal purposes" any more than I want any other kind of "remedy" for what doesn't ail me; and I don't want it under the guise of "refreshments" either. When I want a drink I want it by its right name, and I want to go to a place that savors of my taste and thirst.

Why do I and others want a drink? I do not recall that I ever took a drink alone, unless for medicinal purposes, but I rarely take liquor or anything else for medicinal purposes. When I take a drink I take it for the same reason that a gathering of W.C.T.U. "ladies" take a drink of tea: for the stimulation and exhilaration that come from the cup that cheers. Even the W.C.T.U. members know that something invigorating adds to the enjoyment of a social occasion, and sharpens wits, if one has any.

I remember that elderly people in the town, when I was a young man, wagged their heads with concern and misgiving over what then was called a "still drinker," one whose main interest in drinking was not in connection with the desire for comradeship but only for the sake of imbibing regular stimulant without seeking any social element or value. A "still drinker" drank alone, and was in danger of filling an early grave. In the village where I lived, I remember one or two who were that kind of drinkers and they did go to their graves while young. They were buried alongside many of the "good" residents who died of lard on the liver caused by over-eating and other fatal disorders that obviously followed too much food; but this seemed to be a perfectly respectable finish for even a young person.

Imagine a Frenchman, or an Italian, or a German going out with a prescription and taking home a bottle of wine or beer and drinking it in silence and shame! In Europe, I stroll past the unclosed doors and uncurtained windows of what in America would be called saloons, seeing husbands, wives and their children at tables whose tops are checker-boards, or chess-boards, or plain card-game tops. They are sipping wine, or ale or other cheering concoctions from glasses and mugs, and are happy, sociable, sober and unafraid. In England, the "pub" is an institution, and is described in all sorts of literature, from Fielding to Hardy. The English, like the Americans, eat too much, and sometimes drink too much, and their climate, habits and sports have led to whiskey rather than wine and beer; but the Englishman insists upon his right to drink at home, or in hotels, or restaurants, or the "pub." Evidently it has not been necessary to abolish the saloon to protect or preserve anybody or anything in Europe. The Continent has no Puritans; the most bigoted of this species in England came to America where they, and they alone, found peace.

Sometimes I have occasion to go to Canada, and there, like most men, I visit what is called a "dispensary" immediately after taking a room at a hotel. I find no difficulty in getting what I want to drink, but am told at the "dispensary" to run straight back to my room without stopping along the way. Imagine a company of friends waiting to exchange greetings over a round of drinks having to send to a "dispensary" for something to be

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(*Continued from Page 3*)

brought to a hotel-room before the civilities can begin! It sounds like sending to the drugstore for paregoric for the guests. The whole mental and social attitude is absurd and wrong.

Independent men and women who have for years fought for the plain common liberties of individuals will not and should not be satisfied with such inhibitions and restrictions as parents inflict on children. And it looks now as though we are about to rebel in earnest against being told what we may or may not drink, *and where*. Even some of the leading prohibitionists show signs of having wearied of their job and are now suggesting alternatives and substitute measures. All we ask of the prohibitionist is that he will mind his own business and take care of his own soul, and allow the rest of us to choose for ourselves whether we want ours saved or not. No one will drag the prohibitionist to a saloon or even invite him to have a drink. Let him drink out of a bottle behind the barn, if that suits his fancy. No one will interfere with his way of living, or dying; he may eat and drink what and when and where he will.

And now, both the Republican and Democratic candidates are talking glibly of what we can and can not expect if we once get our freedom from the wanton jailers and slayers who have demolished property and taken life coldly and cruelly without let or hindrance during the long era of tyranny now drawing to a close. It is none of the Government's business where we take a drink. Some of us may want only a little stimulant; most of us want the drink as part of the social amenities of life, and we want to take it around a table with our friends and good fellows. Many of us never take a drink alone, and don't like it that way; we believe that life is none too joyous at best, but we do not care to postpone our good times for a dubious, distant future existence. We want to be happy and carefree at least part-time here and now. We object to waiting while the meddlesome prohibitionist cudgels his righteous mind for fresh ways to spoil our fun.

The Editors presume that the beneficent influence of mint juleps will be observable in this issue.

DAUGHTERS OF NIOBE

by LOUIS UNTERMEYER

After her numerous children had been slain by the indignant—and childless—spinster Artemis, Niobe was metamorphosed into a stone. The stone wept. Every Spring tears fell copiously; by early Autumn the flood threatened to engulf all Thebes, from seers to sight-seers. Niobe's daughters, so runs the fable, inherited their mother's unhappy talent for fluency. They became poets. They wept. They have never ceased weeping.

Not even their lovers dare deny the allegory; every year furnishes additional proof. Each Spring the daughters of Niobe break their ardent and iambic hearts; the metrical tears continue to dampen popular magazines until, by the time the publishers' Fall lists are ready for the printer, the downfall is incalculable. So is it; so has it ever been; and so—for the Niobeans are as fertile as they are fluent—will it ever be. The lamenting past accentuates the lamentable present. Name the great female poet of antiquity and you name Niobe's eldest daughter. The fragments of Sappho reveal her burning, it is true, but salting the flames with well-regulated tears: "For they whom I benefit injure me most. . . ." "According to my weeping. . . ." "I flutter like a child after its mother. . . ." "Now love shakes me, fatal creature, bitter-sweet. . . ." "I cannot weave my web, broken as I am by longing. . . ."

The note swells with increasing time. The two most gifted women poets of the nineteenth century are almost as lachrymose as they are lyrical. Thus Christina Rosse :

The strear moaneth as it floweth,
The wind sigheth as it bloweth,
Leaves are falling, Autumn goeth . . .
Who will help me? Who will love me?
Heaven sets forth no light above me.

And again in the famous *cri de cœur*, through which the singer protests a shade too resignedly:

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head
Nor shady cypress tree . . .
And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

Even more explicitly, we hear it in the sonnet beginning:

All through the livelong night I lay awake
Watering my couch with tears of heaviness;
None stood beside me in my sore distress.
Then cried I to my heart: If thou wilt, break.

Here we come upon the Niobean's salient characteristic: she is not merely weeping, but weeping for herself. Pity is swallowed up in self-pity, and a private disappointment is dramatized into a Universe of Woe. With Emily Dickinson it becomes a very genius of intensification; more than a hundred of her heavily freighted poems cry their anguish in the first person singular. No sorrow, she insists, has ever been as great as hers; she measures every grief she sees "with analytic eyes"; suffering makes her the equal of the Crucified; she confers upon herself the title "Empress of Calvary."

But Sappho, Christina Rossetti and Emily Dickinson, for all their prescience, could scarcely have forseen how lovingly the note of self-pity has been amplified. The exploitation of self-hurt—accompanied by an equally ostentatious bravery—has grown to such proportions that a recent commentator, whose name for the moment escapes me, has classified the latter-day Sapphos as the "O-God-the-pain-girls!" The luxurious laments, the neat and seemingly calculated cries are set to the most adroit meters. "Sorrow like a ceaseless rain beats upon my heart," mourns the most persistent and musical of them. Over and over Edna St. Vincent Millay rings the not so changeable changes on the theme of painful love and its corollary, loss in love. "Am I kin to Sorrow that so oft falls the knocker on my door?" "Love, if I weep it will not matter—" "These hills to hurt me more that am hurt already enough—" "I walk this way hand in hand with Grief—" "Here is a wound that never will heal, I know—" "I being born a woman and distressed—" or to quote more than an initial line:

Sorrow, like a ceaseless rain
Beats upon my heart.
People twist and scream in pain—
Dawn will find them still again—
This has neither wax nor wane,
Neither stop nor start.

And again Miss Millay, *con amore, perpetuum mobile:*

Love has gone and left me and the days are all alike;
Eat I must, and sleep I will—and would that night were here!
But ah! to lie awake and hear the slow hours strike!
Would that it were day again!—with twilight near!

The inevitable result of Edna Millay, according to a malicious reviewer, is Dorothy Parker. Mrs. Parker sounds the notes in a more acid key, twisted, teased and tricked, but they form the same limp chords. Hers is a nimble, heal-and-toe sorrow, a heart fissured with wise-cracks. It is not the serious parts of her volumes which have made Mrs. Parker popular, but the *pastiche* of Housman, Millay and the newspaper-column snapped last line, even though the laugh-clown-laugh attitude has become too obvious to be anything but a pretty, mechanical prop:

Oh, seek, my love, your newer way;
I'll not be left in sorrow.
So long as I have yesterday,
Go take your damned tomorrow.

For the most part, however, the self-mockery is merely another phase of self-pity. It finds almost uninterrupted expression in "Enough Rope." The three first poems in the book declare "Lilacs blossom just as sweet though my heart is shattered—" "Once when I was young and true, someone broke my heart in two—" "Death's the lover I'd be taking . . . small's his care if my heart be breaking—" Rarely has a heart broken so dexterously, so dependably.

Even Elinor Wylie could not escape the manner. In the midst of her abstractions she gave way to a nervous self-concern. Like the living Englishwoman, Anna Wickham, she complained:

I was, being woman, born alone;
I am, being woman, hard beset;
I live by squeezing from a stone
The little nourishment I get.

Sometimes, though less frequently, the emotion sinks to a set of over-familiar gestures, and we have not only a pantomime of pity but a parody of it. Thus, after four accomplished metaphors in "Pity Me," the plea ends:

Pity the prickly star that frightens
The Christ-Child with its shattered spear;
Pity the mightnight when it lightens;
Pity me, my dear.

A dozen lesser names among the contemporaries suggest themselves as further evidence. But a halt must be called and a reservation must be made. A new austerity, an impersonal stoicism strange to women poets, dignifies the work of Léonie Adams, Sylvia Townsend Warner and the late Charlotte Mew. Already these more restrained singers have their imitators. It is even possible, if the rigorous strain persists, that they will present a new phenomenon in poetry—the paradox of Niobes without tears. It is, I say, possible; but it is not immediate.

LITERATI

"'If I was anyone of importance before I became Hall Caine, I could not have been a lesser personage than William Shakespeare.' Perhaps the reincarnation theory so freely acknowledged by Sir Hall Caine may be an accepted commonplace a generation hence."—Perriton Maxwell in *The Bookman.*

* * *

"One is practically compelled to employ the Polish word *Zal* in speaking of Chopin."—Paul Rosenfeld in *The New Republic.*

* * *

"It had been expanded by a later owner in the days of Napoleon the second."—Edwin Balmer and Philip Wylie in "Five Fatal Words."

* * *

"Of Dr. John B. Watson we can be proud."—Gorham Munson in *The New English Weekly.*

* * *

"Mr. [T.S.] Eliot is a forerunner of a possible alliance of British and American writers."—Gorham Munson in *The New English Weekly.*

* * *

"Love ruins everything. Nobody can be in love and be sane. You can't think clearly when you're in love. You can't eat. What good is it? It just makes a mess of things."—Joseph Hergesheimer in *The New York Sun.*

* * *

"Charm is sexual virility."—Joseph Hergesheimer in *The Washington Herald.*

THE WEAKNESS OF AMERICAN CRITICISM

by JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

American literature is perpetually "coming of age." At least once every decade since Emerson's time somebody has discovered that we are adults at last and there is no other culture which has grown up so often. Every time a fairly good novel, a respectable play, or a competent book of criticism makes its appearance, we celebrate our majority all over again and upon each of these occasions we are pathetically certain that, for once, maturity is going to take. So many birthdays are, however, a little disconcerting and perhaps we had best not take them too seriously. The Great American Novel has been published at least a dozen times; almost any writer can make himself seem tremendously important for about six months; and any critic who has practised his trade for more than five years ought to hang his head in shame when he remembers how many "permanent contributions to American Literature" have not been mentioned or thought of six months after the last advertisement appeared. A dozen years ago Floyd Dell was almost a major novelist and Vachel Lindsay was a renaissance all by himself.

No other country takes movements, schools and manifestos quite so seriously. In Paris, for instance, they are confined to the regions of Montparnasse or Montmartre, and though they make a great deal of purely local noise, the revolutions they proclaim are no more important to French literature as a whole than a Central American revolt is important to the government of the United States. But here everyone, from the lofty commentators of the *Hound and Horn* to the reviewers for supposedly popular papers, treats every feeble clamor with the greatest solemnity. Humanism gets itself gravely debated in what ought to be the most responsible organs, and when Humanism evaporates, the Marxian Critics put on their little act to the accompaniment of grave debates which seem to assume that something really important, lasting, and fundamental is up for consideration. Excitable persons get converted, shout their hallelujahs and get their testimonials discussed, just as gravely as if they had not joined some other church the year before. One ought to get excited over æsthetic questions. But no culture has really come of age if it abandons itself, as American literary culture does, to at least one craze per annum and naïvely begins a new era every time a respectable book makes its appearance.

Great American Critics are only a little less common than Great American Novelists, and yet even the most talented of them are, in several conspicuous instances, strangely deficient in any staying power. Ten years ago Mr. Van Wyck Brooks was pretty generally regarded as the most significant American critic; a few years later Mr. Louis Mumford was elevated to the same position; a few years after that Mr. Edmund Wilson displaced him and is, at the present moment, most often singled out as the one who has demonstrated at last that, in this department also, we have "come of age." Yet it is not really clear that we are any more sure of him than we were only a short time ago of the other two. Mr. Brooks has only recently published an admirable book on Emerson which ought perhaps to entitle him to hold his former position. But Mr. Brooks's reputation is more than a decade old and so no one really pays much attention to it because everyone is too busy forgetting Mr. Mumford's achievements or hoping that Mr. Wilson's new enthusiasm for Karl Marx will make him so little recognizable as himself that he may be admired all over again. No one, it should be noted, thinks of calling Mr. Ludwig Lewisohn the Great American Critic—largely because he was not being heard of for the first time when he published "Expression in America." Mr. Stuart Sherman prolonged the life of his fame by reversing all his previous positions. But since what he wrote in the *Herald-Tribune* neatly cancelled everything he had written before, the result is about zero and the men who have actually exerted the greatest influence over American literary taste during the past quarter of a century are the men who have so consistently and continuously written from one point of view that they are taken for granted and almost forgotten when enthusiasts begin to take stock.

The real weakness of American criticism lies not in any lack of enthusiasm, suggestiveness, or even brilliance, but in the sporadic, unstable, irresponsible nature of its enthusiasms; in, that is to say, the obviously adolescent character of its repeated conviction that it is mature at last. American literature will not really have "come of age" until the masterpieces upon which it bases its claims have not all been chosen from the publications of the last two years, and American Criticism will not really have reached any maturity until its acknowledged leaders are men who have stood for something over, let us say, a decade at least. No critic can hope to have a real position if he changes his fundamental principles every Spring.

We need not go so far as to demand of those who set themselves up as literary arbiters that they cultivate the text-book virtues of balance and a sense of proportion. Perhaps to ask that would be to ask too much. Perhaps we cannot expect that they should see far enough and understand deeply enough to protect themselves from even the more preposterous of their gyrations. But there is another way in which a salutary sobriety might be cultivated. If they cannot exercise judgment, they might at least learn caution by endeavoring to recall how sure they were of one thing when they find themselves about to be equally sure of something else. If, in other words, they cannot use judgment then they ought, at least, to be able to remember.

THE DIVERSITY OF LIFE

by CALVIN B. BRIDGES

Not only to the professional biologist, but to any man with a thoughtful inclination or a philosophical bent, the immense numbers of distinct strains and the diversity in type seen in the living forms about us is staggering. The question of how such diversity came into being is the stimulus of all evolutionary thought and investigation. Today there is even a special class of people whose business it is to make new forms of life according to specifications worked out in advance. Neither the import nor the dignity of this fact is modified or impaired by the consideration that the specifications are mainly those which result in greater economic value to mankind. You have a clear illustration of this in the personality and work of Luther Burbank. But, in the laboratory today, one can go much farther in the creation of these new forms. They can be created in numbers beyond ready comprehension or credence—in short, in numbers like those dealt with in modern astronomical calculations.

I offer a concrete example. For the past twenty years, laboratory scientists have been breeding a small fly—*Drosophila Melanogaster*. Since this particular fly provides a whole generation of flies each ten days, they have been able to breed and examine more than six hundred generations of a particular form of life. To have seen that number of generations of men, one would have had to start some 15,000 years before Adam.

This fly, in its wild form, can be caught in millions, all of its individuals substantially identical. But when this fly is bred in the laboratory, occasionally one fly is strikingly different from its brothers and sisters. For example, it might have an eye as white as snow, instead of the dark brick-red of the eye of the wild form. Again, approximately 25% of the children of a given pair (which, by the way, can be as many as 3000, —and I may add parenthetically, that a single male can have more than 50,000 children if provided with enough wives)—can have wings outstretched and curved like those of a gliding gull, instead of being straight and folded together at the side of the fly. By breeding together the males and females of these gull-winged flies, a pure strain of gull-winged flies can be obtained, in which for generation after generation, and for thousands after thousands of flies, all the individuals will alike exhibit the new structural characteristic, and so constitute a new strain of fly. Even when the new character appears in the single individual, as in the original white-eyed male, breeding methods are now known whereby, in three generations, a pure breeding strain can be obtained.

One of the cardinal problems of the practical improver of plant and animal forms is to take separate strains, each of which exhibits a desirable characteristic, and by breeding produce a new strain which combines these characteristics from the original distinct strains and, at the same time, excludes certain other undesired characteristics. In the laboratory work with *Drosophila*, the methods for combining characteristics of separate origin to derive new types have been elaborated in great detail. For example, a derived form having white eyes and the gull wings can be obtained to the number of one-sixteenth of the children in the second generation from a cross between these primary forms. And from these, a wholly pure strain can be established. One can call the white-eyed strain a primary mutant strain and the gull-winged strain another. One sees that with two primary mutant types, one has the possibility of four distinct strains—namely, the original form, next the two separate primary forms, and lastly the secondary or derived form—in this case, the white-eyed, gull-winged fly.

But not merely two primary mutant strains of *Drosophila* are known. Several hundreds of them have been established. Each of these several hundreds of characteristics can be combined with each of the other primary forms, with the result of tens of thousands of secondary bimutant types. And again, on a still more extended scale, these tens of thousands of bimutant types can be combined with the other primary types to give other tens of thousands of tri-mutant types. And so on. Here, as you see, we enter upon immensity—the inconceivably numerous. For, with each new primary mutation, the number of possible new types is doubled. That is to say, with the five hundred primary mutant types of this one fly *Drosophila*, the total number of distinct strains that one could synthesize in the laboratory is the five hundreth power of two.

This is a number of such immense magnitude that before it the mind fails. To even attempt a realization of it requires the following considerations. Let us imagine that all of these possible kinds of flies have been bred by appropriate and well-known methods and exist as pure strains. Now let us take a single sample fly from each of these diverse strains, and place them in a line, one following the other. Since each of these flies is approximately one-tenth of an inch in length, there will be one hundred and twenty different flies to the foot or 633,600 to the mile. Now, let us attempt to pass along this line of flies so as to examine them all. If we travel along this line at the speed of light, one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles each second, reviewing approximately twenty-five billion flies each second, and we travel not simply for years, nor millions, nor billions of years, but for quintillions of years, we will still have seen but a small fraction of one per cent of our line of flies—all different.

FROM A NOTE-BOOK

by VAN WYCK BROOKS

The poet Cowper remarked that he could not imagine a man writing without the intention of publishing or without the idea of a reading public before him. This is a point of common sense that cannot be ignored when we consider those writers of our day who seem to be so anxious not to communicate their thoughts. In their desire, which is natural enough, not to coöperate with a vulgarized public, they exclude even the judicious public, to their own great loss. For surely the good will of the judicious public is one of the prerequisites of good writing; and a writer who, for whatever reason, ignores this law, soon finds himself, as Herman Melville put it, "bombinating *in vacuo*." Indeed, so necessary is this coöperation that Vernon Lee actually describes writing as "the craft of manipulating the contents of the reader's mind." Why should we interest ourselves in writers who wish to throw dust in our eyes? They are writers of a kind which, as Gil Blas said, will only deceive their own generation; for their personalities are so lacking in vitality that they cannot afford to expose them. "How many authors," observes André Gide, "have no personality that would not be lost in the mass of humanity on the day when they consented to employ *who's* and *which's* as everybody else does!" Yet these same authors are permitted to talk one another into fame. They have a way of referring to one another as if not to know of them were to inhabit perpetual night.

* * *

Mannerism is the sign of a second-rate mind; pride in mannerism the sign of a third-rate mind.

* * *

The world, the flesh and the devil: these three—and the worst of these is the world. In fact, the world is almost the chief imponderable in any question of critical valuation. Compare the Cambridge authors with the Concord authors. The Concord authors have inherited the twentieth century, and everyone speaks with respect of Emerson, Thoreau and Hawthorne; while of Lowell, Holmes and Longfellow, men of the world, the world has nothing to say. Too much of an infusion of the world destroys the literary fibre, destroys intensity; and if you cultivate the world, the world will soon cease to cultivate you. That is why Tolstoy's flight, in the last days of his life, will always have for authors a symbolic value.

* * *

How deeply ingrained in the American mind is the desire for prestige! One sees it, quaintly enough, in the life of Mrs. Eddy. Her devout biographer, Sybil Wilbur, is less at pains, one would almost say, to prove Mrs. Eddy's piety than her good breeding, her taste in dress, the quality of her rustic antecedents, her misfortune in having been dragooned into marriage with a "flamboyant" dentist, her obligation to desert the "narrow-minded artisans" who had been her first followers when she began to form her clientèle in the higher circles of Boston.

* * *

Henry James was consumed all his life with the typical pioneer passion for prestige and gentility. Indeed, he erected this passion into a pseudo-spiritual quest, endowed with mystical values. He expects us to take at his exalted valuation some commonplace woman of title, and then expects us to share his chagrin when she turns out to be as commonplace as we knew her to be from the beginning; he expects us to find it tragic when she has become, from his point of view, and not unnaturally considering his disillusionment, a "monkey". Other things being equal, people will tend to enjoy the later Henry James in proportion as they admire inordinately a social class to which they cannot hope to gain admittance.

* * *

Cosmopolitanism in literature is an external substitute for universality. No cosmopolitan writer is ever read very long outside his own language, while the "local" writer who has universalized himself on his own acres passes muster in all languages. Hawthorne's German translator wrote to him that the Germans took "The House of the Seven Gables" for a purely German book, instantly applicable to German conditions, German pride of family and all the rest of it.

ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS SERIES
No. 1

Mr. D. B. Wyndham-Lewis composes an advertisement for Lyons' Swiss Rolls, published in the London *Daily Mail:*

D. B. Wyndham-Lewis goes all "Whimsy-whamsy" over Lyons' Swiss Rolls.

Every time a fairy sneezes a new Lyons' Swiss Roll is born, and every time a fairy trips over a bluebell, his remark breaks into a million pieces. Some of them turn into Nippys.

Lyons' Swiss Rolls are made by the fairies, and if you peep into Cadby Hall about bedtime you will see the chefs all going dancey. Cadby Hall is in Kensington, where Peter Pan lives, so the fairies ask Peter Pan to help.

The fairy dough used for Lyons' Swiss Rolls is made of butterflies' kisses and some of the big coloured bubbles Christopher Robin used to blow before he went into the Big Three class. The fairies roll it out very dainty and thin. Then they tread on Peter Pan a bit and go away and dance.

The jam is very whimsy, and is made of fruit which has been peeped at by rabbits very early in the morning. When a Lyons' chef begins to dance he is "thinking jam." They spread it very carefully and roll up each roll, blow it a kiss, and flit away to whisper lovely furry thoughts to the managing director of the Metal Castings and Engineering Supplies Corporation, who has an office in Liverpool Street.

—*D.B.W.-L.*

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